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The Prophet's Noble Character



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How did Prophet Muhammad Achieve Reform?

Reform has become today's fashionable issue. Everyone is demanding reform although many are not ready for its consequences. To those, Mr. Amr Khaled presents the example of a reform pioneer through the suffering of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) during his 23 years of mission, as an inspiration to those seeking reform while resting in their cozy chairs. Amr Khaled reviews the phases of struggle and suffering of Muhammad while he called upon people to embrace the Islamic faith. He also discusses the true concept of reform, and how the Prophet predicted from the beginning that it would not be achieved quickly or easily.

First Module of Reform

Amr Khaled: Let us take a look at verse 81 of surah 3 of the Qur'an, (The House of Imran): "Allah made a covenant with the prophets: *{If, after what I have vouchsafed to you of the Scriptures and wisdom, there comes to you a messenger confirming the truth of what you have in your possession, you shall believe in him and you shall help him. Do you,' said He, 'affirm this and accept the obligation I lay upon you in these terms?' They answered: 'We do affirm it.' Said He: 'Then bear witness, and I am also a witness to you}*. (The Holy Qur'an, 3:81)

The Almighty Allah gathered all the prophets and told every one of them, "if Muhammad was sent to you while you were still alive, you must follow and assist him." All the prophets agreed to that and Allah bore witness. This holy verse shows the dignity and position of Muhammad, and that achieving reform in this world is through following his message and teachings.

Religion of Hard Tasks

Before receiving revelation, Muhammad used to seclude himself in the cave of Hiraa to meditate. What was the reason for this? It was a form of worship Muhammad practiced between the age of thirty and forty, during which he would meditate upon the greatness of Allah's creation. This paved the way toward prophethood.

Reaching the cave of Hiraa is rather difficult and exhausting, even for a young man. In this cave, one can see a great amount of the sky, as well as the holy Ka'bah.

One night, while he was meditating in the cave, the Angel Gabriel came to Muhammad. On this occasion the angel did not come to him in the form of a human but in its true angelic form. Muhammad recalls the experience: *"While I was in the cave at night, the angel came to me. He took me and held me very tight until I thought I was going to die for sure. When he released me, I was very exhausted. He ordered me to read, to which I replied, 'I cannot read', so he held me again very tight until I thought I was going to die for sure again. Again he released me and said, 'Read' and*

again I replied 'I cannot read', so for the third time he held me very tight and shook me hard until I thought it was certain death and said, 'Read'. I asked, 'What should I read?' He said, 'Read in the name of your Lord who has created". (96:1)

The first words of the Prophet's message show that Islam is a religion of knowledge and reform.

It was a hard start, for Islam had difficult tasks aiming to reform humanity until Judgment Day. The message began with power and strength, in the same way the Almighty Allah told Zacharia, John and Jesus to, *{hold fast to the book with all your strength}* (19:12). The way Gabriel held Muhammad when entrusting him with the divine message is symbolic to each one of us. In this way the Almighty Allah tells us: *{you are all bearers of this message, so hold fast to it with all your strength}*.

Muhammad ran down the mountain heading home, calling out to his wife, *"Cover me! Cover me!"* From that day, Muhammad carried the message and lived by it. His nights were spent praying to Allah and his days were spent calling upon people to embrace the new faith. Verses of the Qur'an were revealed to him ordering him to wake up, guide people, and keep praying to Allah, outlining the first rule of reform: *{O thou enshrouded one! Keep awake in prayer at night}* (73:1-2), *{O you enfolded [in your coverings], arise and warn!}* (74:1-2) and *{When you have completed your task, resume your toil...}* (94:7), namely devotion and dedication in worship. These verses were some of the first revelations Muhammad received.

Muhammad's route was clearly defined. He was sent to reform the earth—this was the path he took. To follow it, one must work toward reform.

When the Prophet first began calling people to the new faith, his wife Khadijah asked him to rest a while. He replied, *"The time of rest has passed, Khadijah"*. 3 years passed and only 4 believers followed him: Khadijah, his friend Abu Bakr, his servant Zayd ibn Harithah and a little boy called Ali ibn Abi Talib, who was also Muhammad**'s** cousin. Those 4 were the first Muslims. Later on, Abu Bakr brought 7 new followers to the faith. Those 7 were all among the **"Ten Promised with Paradise"**.

Muhammad began regular meetings with them at the house of Al Arqam ibn Abi Al Arqam. He showed them the ways of Islam and taught them patience, sacrifice, and trusting the Almighty Allah. The stories of the prophets Joseph and Hud descended upon him to teach him and his followers patience and endurance. The companions of the Prophet started to gather round him more and more for 3 years. Then, the verse was revealed to *{proclaim what you are bidden}* (15:94) and announce Islam.

Muhammad climbed the hill of As Safa, the most well-known elevation in the whole of Makkah, to announce Islam to its people at a time when 360 idols were placed around the Ka'bah. He felt no fear or shame. He addressed all the tribes of Makkah, all of whom gathered in front of

him: *"If I told you that there is an army behind this mountain getting ready to attack you, would you believe me?"* he asked them. They replied, *"Of course we would, we have never known you to tell lies."* He said, *"Then hear this, I was sent to warn you against great suffering"*. It was then that the abuse, torture and sacrifices began.

Forms of Abuse
What is the forms of abuse Muhammad had to endure?"

They used to throw sand on him so that when he went home he would be covered in dust. His daughter Zaynab cried once when she saw him in that state. *"Don't cry my daughter"*, he said, *"Allah is supporting your father"*. He was certain that reform was on its way. One day they threw camel's guts on him while he was prostrating in prayer. He remained in prostration, perhaps waiting for one of the Muslims to pass by and take the dirt off his back. His daughter Fatimah was walking by when she saw him. With tears in her eyes, she removed the dirt from his back. He said to her, *"Don't cry my daughter, the Almighty Allah will honour His religion and grant your father victory"*.

Another time, Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt took off his robe and wrapped it forcefully around Muhammad's neck, strangling him until he fell on his knees in pain. Many other times they called the Prophet names, calling him *"Muthammam"*, meaning *"the dispraised one"*, or *"the blamed one"*. All the companions of the Prophet were deeply angered by this, to which he would laugh and say, *"Why are you upset? They are insulting Muthammam and I am Muhammad!"*

Strengthening the Prophet's companions with sacrifices
As Muhammad continued his mission, the hostility and abuse reached higher levels. Many were killed, many died under torture and others were blinded. An old lady from among the believers named Sumayya was brutally tortured by Abu Jahl, the Prophet's most hardened opponent. Muhammad witnessed this torture but was powerless to stop it. He offered Sumayya and her family words of support: *"Have patience, Yasser's family, you are promised Paradise"*. Abu Jahl became infuriated by her tremendous patience and endurance as she told him over and over, *"Allah is one! Allah is the only one!"* and killed her with a spear in her private parts.

The Prophet knew that reform would not be accomplished overnight but after years to come, and indeed, 23 years later it was achieved.

Sumayya died, her husband Yasser was killed and her son Ammar was beaten and skinned. The unbelievers kidnapped Khabbab ibn al Aratt, tore off his clothes and pushed him to the ground on charcoal stones heated with fire, until the charcoal was extinguished from the grease of his back. When they released him, he went to Muhammad and pleaded with him, *"Will you not pray to Allah to help us?"* Muhammad replied, *"the Almighty Allah will grant his religion victory, but you are rushing. Have patience"*. Nothing is accomplished overnight. It was sacrifices that strengthened the companions of the Prophet.

No Compromises

Quraish, the ruling tribe in Makkah who were the main opponents of Muhammad, were now looking for a solution. They offered Muhammad wealth, power and marriage to beautiful women. At one point Utbah ibn Rabi'ah was sent to make such proposals to the Prophet. When he stopped talking the Prophet asked him whether he had finished. *"Yes,"* replied Utbah. *"Then hear this,"* Muhammad said, and started reciting from "Fussilat", surah 41 of the Qur'an. When he reached the verse that says, *{But if they turn away, say: 'I have given you warning of a thunderbolt, like the thunderbolt that struck [the tribes of] Ad and Thamud'}*, Utbah was struck with fear and panic, covering Muhammad's mouth with his hands and saying, *"I beg you in the name of our kinsfolk, say no more!"*

No attempts at negotiation or compromise of this matter worked with Muhammad, so instead they went to his uncle and protector Abu Talib, and asked him to keep his nephew away from them or else they would kill him. Muhammad said to his uncle in reply, *"I swear to Allah that even if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand in return for leaving this message, I will not until Allah grants us victory or I die first!"* Abu Talib responded with unfailing support, *"Go my son and do what you wish"*.

The Quraish then resorted to isolating Muhammad and his companions in a barren desert called the Mountain Pass of Bani Talib, boycotting them completely, to the extent that they eventually had to eat leaves to survive. Khadijah insisted on joining them, even though the Quraish were willing to spare her. They stayed there for 3 years until the boycott agreement was finally annulled. It was an experience that strengthened their resolve immensely.

The Epitome of Forgiveness

The Prophet's wife Khadijah and his uncle Abu Talib both died in the same year. Only Allah would be there for him now. Muhammad devoted more and more effort to spreading his message. He walked all the way to Al Ta'if (more then 100 kilometres from Makkah). After about 10 days in Al Ta'if Muhammad was driven out by its people. They gathered in two lines, throwing stones and rocks at him. Zayd ibn Harithah was with Muhammad, trying to protect him from the stones with his body. Fifty year-old Muhammad was dripping blood from his feet, when he met the angel of the mountains. *"If you wish me to collapse these mountains on Al Ta'if I will do as you ask"* the angel said to Muhammad, who replied, *"No, may Allah raise from their children a generation who worship him"*.

Muhammad pleaded to Allah while returning from Al Ta'if: *"To You, My Lord, I complain of my weakness, lack of support and the humiliation I am made to receive. Most compassionate and merciful! You are the Lord of the weak, and You are my Lord. To whom do You leave me? To a distant person who receives me with hostility? Or to an enemy to whom You have given power over me? If you are not displeased with me, I do not care what I face. I would, however, be much happier with Your mercy. I seek refuge in the light of Your face by which all darkness is dispelled and both this life and the life to come are put on their right courses against incurring Your wrath or being the*

subject of your anger. To You I submit, until I earn Your pleasure. Everything is powerless without Your support".

The Almighty Allah comforted His messenger and reassured him (one night), as Muhammad was asleep, the Angel Gabriel woke him and took him on the Night Journey to Jerusalem and the Seven Heavens, where he was shown his honorable status in the Afterlife.

Muhammad continued to preach his message and appealed to several Arab tribes to accept the new faith but they refused. One of the tribesmen hit the Prophet's camel in its side so that it threw him off its back while the rest of them sat laughing at him. He preached his message to 26 different tribes with no success, but he never gave up.

Kol El Nas: *Was the exodus the answer to all these problems?*

Amr Khaled: Yes, the exodus, or immigration to Madinah was not an easy task. When Muhammad was leaving Makkah, he turned and looked back and said with tears in his eyes, *"Only Allah knows that you are the most beloved of all places to my heart, and if it was not for your people driving me out I would never have left you"*. The Prophet's companions left everything behind their wealth and their homes to immigrate with the Prophet to Madinah, and there, a new life began.

Several battles were fought during this period. Badr, Uhud, Hunayn and many others. At one time, during the battle of Uhud, Muhammad was badly injured and some of his teeth was broken.

After 13 years of oppression and abuse in Makkah, followed by 10 years in Madinah filled with struggles and battles, Muhammad died at the age of 63, a strong and determined fighter. Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Prophet's cousin, reported that, *"whenever the battle got hard and rough, we used to gather behind Muhammad for protection"*. Another time, during the battle of Hunayn, the sword broke in Muhammad's hand and he called out to the fighters, *"I am the Prophet, this is the truth! I am the son of Abdul Muttalib!"*, gathering all his followers around him and spurring them on... into the battle for reform.

Allah's peace and blessings be upon him

The Exemplary Justice of the Prophet

In the Qur'an, Allah commands believers to *{Be upholders of justice, bearing witness for Allah alone, even against yourselves or your parents and relatives. Whether they are rich or poor, Allah is well able to look after them. Do not follow your own desires and deviate from the truth...}* (Surat an-Nisa': 135). With the rules he imposed on Muslims, his just and tolerant attitude towards those of other religions, languages, races and tribes, and his way of not discriminating between rich and poor, but treating everybody equally, Allah's Messenger (saas) is a great example to all of mankind. Allah says this to His Prophet (saas) in one verse:

They are people who listen to lies and consume ill-gotten gains. If they come to you, you can either judge between them or turn away from them. If you turn away from them, they cannot harm you in any way. But if you do judge, judge between them justly. Allah loves the just. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 42)

The Prophet (saas) abided by Allah's commands, even with such difficult people, and never made any concessions in his implementation of justice. He became an example for all times with the words, *{My Lord has commanded justice...}* (Surat al-A'raf: 29).

A number of incidents testify to the Prophet (saas)'s justice. He lived in a place where people of different religions, languages, races and tribes all co-existed. It was very difficult for those societies to live together in peace and security, and to check those who sought to spread dissension. One group could grow aggressive towards and even attack another over the slightest word or action. Yet, the justice of the Prophet (saas) was a source of peace and security for those other communities, just as much as it was for Muslims. During the time of the Prophet (saas), Christians, Jews and pagans were all treated equally. The Prophet (saas) abided by the verse *{There is no compulsion where the religion is concerned...}* (Surat al-Baqara: 256), explaining the true religion to everyone, but leaving them free to make up their own minds.

In another verse, Allah revealed to the Prophet (saas) the kind of justice and and conciliation he needed to adopt towards those of other religions:
So call and go straight as you have been ordered to. Do not follow their whims and desires but say, *{I believe in a Book sent down by Allah and I am ordered to be just between you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. We have our actions and you have your actions. There is no debate between us and you. Allah will gather us all together. He is our final destination.}* (Surat ash-Shura: 15)

This noble attitude of the Prophet (saas), being in total harmony with the morality of the Qur'an, should be taken as an example of how members of different religions today should be treated. The Prophet (saas)'s justice brought about understanding between people of different races. In many of his addresses, even in his final sermon, the Prophet (saas) stated that superiority lay not in race but in godliness as Allah states in the verse:

{Mankind! We created you from a male and female,and made you into peoples and tribes so that you might come to know each other. The noblest among you in Allah's sight is that one of you who best performs his duty. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware}. (Surat al-Hujurat: 13)

Two hadiths report the Prophet (saas) as saying:
"You are sons of Adam, and Adam came from dust. Let the people cease to boast about their ancestors."

"These genealogies of yours are not a reason to revile anyone. You are all children of Adam. No one has any superiority over another except in religion and taqwa (godliness)."

During his final sermon, the Prophet (saas) called on Muslims in these terms:
"There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab and for a non-Arab over an Arab; nor for white over the black nor for the black over the white except in piety. Verily the noblest among you is he who is the most pious."

The agreement made with the Christians of Najran in the south of the Arabian Peninsula was another fine example of the justice of the Prophet (saas). One of the articles in the agreement reads: *"The lives of the people of Najran and its surrounding area, their religion, their land, property, cattle and those of them who are present or absent, their messengers and their places of worship are under the protection of Allah and guardianship of His Prophet."*

The Compact of Medina, signed by the Muslim immigrants from Mecca, the indigenous Muslims of Medina and the Jews of Medina is another important example of justice. As a result of this constitution, which established justice between communities with differing beliefs and ensured the protection of their various interests, long years of enmity were brought to an end. One of the most outstanding features of the treaty is the freedom of belief it established. The relevant article reads: *"The Jews of Banu 'Awf are one nation with the Muslims; the Jews have their religion and the Muslims have theirs..."*

Article 16 of the treaty reads: *"The Jew who follows us is surely entitled to our support and the same equal rights as any one of us. He shall not be wronged nor his enemy be assisted."*

The Prophet (saas)'s companions remained true to that article in the treaty, even after his death, and even practiced it with regard to Berbers, Buddhists, Brahmans and people of other beliefs. One of the main reasons why the golden age of Islam was one of peace and security was the Prophet (saas)'s just attitude, itself a reflection of Qur'anic morality.
The justice of the Prophet (saas) also awoke feelings of confidence in non-Muslims, and many, including polytheists, asked to be taken under his protection. Allah revealed the following request from the polytheists in the Qur'an, and also told the Prophet (saas) of the attitude he should adopt towards such people:

{If any of the idolators ask you for protection, give them protection until they have heard the words of Allah. Then convey them to a place where they are safe. That is because they are a people who do not know. How could any of the idolators possibly have a treaty with Allah and with His Messenger, except for those you made a treaty with at the Masjid al-Haram? As long as they are straight with you, be straight with them. Allah loves those who do their duty}. (Surat at-Tawba: 6-7)

In our day, the only solution to the fighting and conflict going on all over the world is to adopt the morality of the Qur'an, and, like the Prophet (saas), never to depart from the path of justice, making no distinction between different religions, languages, or races. The Prophet (saas)'s human love, kind thought and compassion, which turned those around him to true religion and warmed their hearts to faith, is that superior morality which all Muslims should seek to reproduce. (For further reading about the attributes of the Prophet (saas), see **"The Prophet Muhammad (saas)"** by Harun Yahya)

His Manners and Disposition

{By the grace of Allah, you are gentle towards the people; if you had been stern and ill-tempered, they would have dispersed from round about you} (translation of Qur'an 3:159)

About himself the prophet (peace be upon him) said: *"Allah has sent me as an apostle so that I may demonstrate perfection of character, refinement of manners and loftiness of deportment."* (Malik, Mawatta; Ahmed, Musnad; Mishkat)

By nature he was gentle and kind hearted, always inclined to be gracious and to overlook the faults of others. Politeness and courtesy, compassion and tenderness, simplicity and humility, sympathy and sincerity were some of the keynotes of his character. In the cause of right and justice he could be resolute and severe but more often than not, his severity was tempered with generosity. He had charming manners which won him the affection of his followers and secured their devotion. Though virtual king of Arabia and an apostle of Allah, he never assumed an air of superiority. Not that he had to conceal any such vein by practice and artifice: with fear of Allah, sincere humility was ingrained in his heart. He used to say,

"I am a Prophet of Allah but I do not know what will be my end." (Bukhari, Sahih Bukhari, Chapter "Al-Janaiz")

In one of his sermons calculated to instill the fear of Allah and the day of reckoning in the hearts of men, he said : *"O people of Quraish be prepared for the hereafter, I cannot save you from the punishment of Allah; O Bani Abd Manaf, I cannot save you from Allah; O Abbas, son of Abdul Mutalib, I cannot protect you either; O Fatima, daughter of Muhammad, even you I cannot save."* (Sahahin)

He used to pray : *"O Allah! I am but a man. If I hurt any one in any manner, then forgive me and do not punish me."* (Ahmed, Musnad, Vol. 6 pg. 103)

He always received people with courtesy and showed respect to older people and stated: *"To honor an old man is to show respect to Allah."*

He would not deny courtesy even to wicked persons. It is stated that a person came to his house and asked permission for admission. The prophet (peace be upon him) remarked that he was not a good person but might be admitted. When he came in and while he remained in the house, he was shown full courtesy. When he left Aiysha (ra) said : *"You did not think well of this man, but you treated him so well."* . The prophet (peace be upon him) replied : *"He is a bad person in the sight of Allah who does not behave courteously and people shun his company bacause of his bad manners."* (Bukhari, Sahih Bukhari) .

He was always the first to greet another and would not withdraw his hand from a handshake till the other man withdrew his. If one wanted to say something in his ears, he would not turn away till one had finished (Abu Dawud, Tirmizi). He did not like people to get up for him and used to say : *"Let him who likes people to stand up in his honour, he should seek a place in hell."* (Abu Dawud, Kitabul Adab, Muhammadi Press, Delhi).

He would himself, however, stand up when any dignitary came to him. He had stood up to receive the wet nurse who had reared him in infancy and had spread his own sheet for her. His foster brother was given similar treatment. He avoided sitting at a prominent place in a gathering, so much so that people coming in had difficulty in spotting him and had to ask which was the Prophet (peace be upon him). Quite frequently uncouth bedouins accosted him in their own gruff and impolite manner but he never took offence. (Abu Dawud Kitabul Atama).

He used to visit the poorest of ailing persons and exhorted all muslims to do likewise (Bukhari, Sahih Bukhari, Chapter "Attendance on ailing persons"). He would sit with the humblest of persons saying that righteousness alone was the criterion of one's superiority over another. He invariably invited people be they slaves, servants or the poorest believers, to partake with him of his scanty meals (Tirmizi, Sunan Tirmizi).

Whenever he visited a person he would first greet him and then take his permission to enter the house. He advised the people to follow this etiquette and not to get annoyed if anyone declined to give permission, for it was quite likely the person concerned was busy otherwise and did not mean any disrespect (Ibid).

There was no type of household work too low or too undignified for him. Aiysha (ra) has stated, *"He always joined in household work and would at times mend his clothes, repair his shoes and sweep the floor. He would milk, tether, and feed his animals and do the household shopping."* (Qazi Iyaz: Shifa; Bukhari, Sahih Bukhari, Chapter: Kitabul Adab)

He would not hesitate to do the menial work of others, particularly of orphans and widows (Nasi, Darmi). Once when there was no male member in the house of the companion Kabab Bin Arat who had gone to the battlefield, he used to go to his house daily and milk his cattle for the inhabitants (Ibn Saad Vol. 6, p 213).

Justice

The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked people to be just and kind. As the supreme judge and arbiter, as the leader of men, as generalissimo of a rising power, as a reformer and apostle, he had always to deal with men and their affairs. He had often to deal with mutually inimical and warring tribes when showing justice to one carried the danger of antagonizing the other, and yet he never deviated from the path of justice. In administering justice, he made no distinction between believers and nonbelievers, friends and foes, high and low. From numerous instances reported in the traditions, a few are given below.

Sakhar, a chief of a tribe, had helped Muhammad (peace be upon him) greatly in the seige of Taif, for which he was naturally obliged to him. Soon after, two charges were brought against Sakhar: one by Mughira of illegal confinement of his (Mughira's) aunt and the other by Banu Salim of forcible occupation of his spring by Sakhar. In both cases, he decided against Sakhar and made him undo the wrong. (Abu Dawud, Sunan Dawud, pg.80)

Abdullah Bin Sahal, a companion, was deputed to collect rent from Jews of Khaibar. His cousin Mahisa accompanied him but, on reaching Khaibar, they had separated. Abdullah was waylaid and done to death. Mahisa reported this tragedy to the Prophet (peace be upon him) but as there were no eye-witnesses to identify the guilty, he did not say anything to the Jews and paid the blood-money out of the state revenues (Bukhari, Sahih Bukhari Nasai).

A woman of the Makhzoom family with good connections was found guilty of theft. For the prestige of the Quraish, some prominent people including Asama Bin Zaid interceded to save her from punishment. The Prophet (peace be upon him) refused to condone the crime and expressed displeasure saying : *"Many a community ruined itself in the past as they only punished the poor and ignored the offences of the exalted. By Allah, if Muhammad's (My) daughter Fatima would have committed theft, her hand would have been severed."* (Bukhari, Sahh Bukhari, Chapter "Alhadood")

The Jews, in spite of their hostility to the Prophet (peace be upon him), were so impressed by his impartiallity and sense of justice that they used to bring their cases to him, and he decided them according to Jewish law. (Abu Dawud, Sunan Dawud)
Once, while he was distributing the spoils of war, people flocked around him and one man almost fell upon him. He pushed the men with a stick causing a slight abrasion. He was so sorry about this that he told the man that he could have his revenge, but the man said, "O messenger of Allah, I forgive you." (Abu Dawud, Kitablu Diyat).

In his fatal illness, the Prophet (peace be upon him) proclaimed in a concourse assembled at his house that if he owed anything to anyone the person concerned could claim it; if he had ever hurt anyone's person, honor or property, he could have his price while he was yet in this world. A hush fell on the crowd. One man came forward to claim a few dirhams which were paid at once. (Ibn Hisham, Sirat-ur-Rasul)

Love for the Poor

The Prophet (peace be upon him) enjoined upon Muslims to treat the poor kindly and to help them with alms, zakat, and in other ways. He said: *"He is not a perfect muslim who eats his fill and lets his neighbor go hungry."*

He asked, *"Do you love your Creator? Then love your fellow beings first."*

Monopoly is unlawful in Islam and he preached that : *"It is diffucult for a man laden with riches to climb the steep path that leads to bliss."*

He did not prohibit or discourage the aquisition of wealth but insisted that it be lawfully aquired by honest means and that a portion of it would go to the poor. He advised his followers : *"To give the laborer his wages before his perspiration dried up."*

He did not encourage beggary either and stated that : *"Allah is gracious to him who earns his living by his own labor, and that if a man begs to increase his property, Allah will diminish it and whoever has food for the day, it is prohibited for him to beg."*

To his wife he said : *"O Aysha, love the poor and let them come to you and Allah will draw you near to Himself."* (Bukhari, Sahih Bukhari)

One or two instances of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) concern for the poor may be given here. A Madinan, Ibad Bin Sharjil, was once starving. He entered an orchard and picked some fruit. The owner of the orchard gave him a sound beating and stripped off his clothes. The poor man appealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) who remonstrated the owner thus: *"This man was ignorant, you should have dispelled his ignorance; he was hungry, you should have fed him."*

His clothes were restored to the Madinan and, in addition, some grain was given to him (Abu Dawud, Kitabul Jihad).
A debtor, Jabir Bin Abdullah, was being harassed by his creditor as he could not clear his debt owing to the failure of his date crop. The Prophet (peace be upon him) went with Jabir to the house of the creditor and pleaded with him to give Jabir some more time but the creditor was not prepared to oblige. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then went to the oasis and having seen for himself that the crop was really poor, he again approached the creditor with no better result. He then rested for some time and approached the creditor for a third time but the latter was adamant. The Prophet (peace be upon him) went again to the orchard and asked Jabir to pluck the dates. As Allah would have it, the collection not only sufficed to clear the dues but left something to spare (Bukhari, Sahih Bukhari).

His love for the poor was so deep that he used to pray: *"O Allah, keep me poor in my life and at my death and raise me at resurrection among those who are poor."* (Nasai, Chapter: Pardon).

Can Prophet Muhammad be taken as a Model for Muslims to follow?

Being the final Prophet of God, Prophet Muhammad has been endowed with a life that is an epitome of success. He was born an orphan and rose to become a ruler of integrity. Each of the different phases of his life provides examples for anyone who wishes to emulate it for righteous living.

The Prophet's character alone is a paragon of virtue, a model for all men. God says to the reader of the Quran: *{You have indeed in the Messenger of God (Muhammad) a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is God and the Final Day.}* (33:21)

Ali Akbar, in his book "**God and Man**", says: "Great minds and teachers like Buddha and Christ could not present their lives as models for mankind to follow. One left the family while the other had none. One severed his connections with the worldly affairs altogether and the other had never entered into them. Their teachings are lofty but can be followed only by those who live an ascetic life like them. The human progress in acquiring knowledge of the Creator and the Universe and mastering elements and scientific research could never be possible if all people lived ascetic lives, and the world would come to an end in one generation as far as human beings are concerned if all practised celibacy. God Who is the Creator of mankind could not depute persons to advocate principles contrary to the laws laid down by Him for the procreation of His creatures.

"But the great model Muhammad presents all phases of life to follow. As an orphan, as a shepherd, as a son, as a nephew, as father, as grandfather, as husband, as a citizen, as a neighbour, as a humanitarian and lover to children and orphans, as supporter and free worker for poor widows and needy persons, as tolerant teacher never offending susceptibilities or beliefs of others, as conqueror, as forgiver of those who persecuted him after they came under his power by his example of forgiving the people of Mecca who had ruthlessly persecuted him, as master of those who came to him as slaves by freeing them at once, as a ruler and a teacher of good treatment which should be meted to those who differ from you in religion when they come under your protection by his own example, as the first giver in the world to women a right of full possession of property and inheritance from parents, sons, brothers and sisters and other relations; and in many other respects a model to follow."

Did Prophet Muhammad Perform Miracles?

Prophet Muhammad did perform some miracles but they were all spiritual in nature. One of his well-known miracles was the "Night Journey" during which he travelled (spiritually) to the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (later to be known as Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest mosque in Islam) and from there to Heaven and back. When he returned he taught Muslims the five daily prayers. However, Muslims do not need to make an issue over these miracles to strengthen or highlight the Islamic religion.

Physical miracles were performed by some of the earlier Prophets to convince the people of their divine missions, usually when forced or requested. The pagan Meccans too did ask the Prophet what miracles he could or had performed. Hinting that miracles as performed by the earlier Prophets would have no effect in his time, the Prophet pointed at the Quran and said in a metaphorical sense: *"The Quran is my miracle."*

Indeed, the time (some 600 years after Jesus Christ) was ripe for an intellectual miracle _ a Book _ to take place. The Quran is that Book, a living miracle, one that exists today just as "performed" by the Prophet; a tangible one indeed, a miracle by which people could see, touch and receive guidance.

By this miracle, (the Quran), Muslims throughout the world, from those days till today, have abstained from the prohibited and obeyed the obligatory, such as performing the five daily prayers, facing the Ka'aba in Mecca during prayers, fasting in Ramadhan, going for the Hajj, and living as best as they could according to the teachings of Islam.

How the Prophet Instilled Brotherhood among Muslims

Sure, Islam isn't racist; almost any Muslim will tell you that. But Islam's very strong stance against racism and prejudice wasn't just demonstrated in words and principles: *{O Mankind, We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is he who is the most righteous of you}* (Al-Hujurat:13). It was also evident in the Prophet's establishment of the mu'akhah (brotherhood) system.

About six months after the Muslims of Makkah had left their homes, livelihoods, and, in many cases, their families, for the sake of Allah and immigrated to Madinah, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) established a system that would bring together Muslims of two different cities and different tribes.

The Muslims who had left Makkah were called Muhajirun, immigrants to Madinah; they had left their homes for the sake of Allah. They were now homeless and more or less penniless in Madinah. They needed help. Enter the Muslims of Madinah. They became the Ansars (helpers) of their Muhajirun brothers and sisters in faith.

They Were Not Just "Roommates"

Bringing Muslims together (Mu'akhah), coming from the same root as akh "brother" in Arabic, means a system of making people brothers. The Prophet paired one Muhajir with one Ansar. They were not just temporary roommates. They became brothers in the truest sense. Not only did the Ansar Muslim provide the Muhajir Muslim with food, shelter, and clothing. He offered him consolation, support, and true Muslim fellowship.

Although there were no set rules, every one of the Ansar who got a Muhajir as his brother gave an equal share in his property and belongings to his Muhajir brother.

In the bad old days of Arab tribal enmity and prejudices, the mu'akhah system was truly revolutionary. It gave the Muhajirun a chance to rebuild their lives in their new home, while creating a deep bond of love and affection between Muslims of two very different cities.

The regional differences between people, languages, and culture, despite smaller distances as compared to today, were great.

So it was perhaps strange for people at the time to think of an Arab and a non-Arab living together as brothers.

For instance, Bilal ibn Rabah, an African Muhajir and an ex-slave, was paired as a brother with Abu Rawahah `Abdullah ibn `Abdul Rahman. And they were brothers, not mere roommates. A black man and an Arab. Who could have imagined this state of affairs in the pre-Islamic tribal Arabia?

They Even Used to Inherit from Each Other

This brotherhood was even more important than the blood relationship, since it was based on faith, not genetics or blood.

This existed to such a degree that initially, the Muslim brothers in mu'akhah would inherit from each other. However, later on, this practice was abrogated.

The mu'akhah system is clearly an example of Islam's solid commitment to the establishment of a brotherhood based not on color, language, race, or ethnicity, but purely on faith. Muslims today need to remember this system and our community leadership should be proactive to implement the Islamic ideals.

The Truth about Muhammad

Michael H. Hart, the American author of **The Hundred: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History**, called Muhammad (peace be upon him) *"the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels."* To this, one can add a number of his other unique achievements such as the following:

There never was anyone like Muhammad (peace be on him) whose life has been recorded in such meticulous detail, and there never was anyone in history like Muhammad (peace be upon him) whose exemplary deeds are so closely emulated in their daily lives by so many people from so many countries and regions of this world, and to this day.

It was Muhammad alone, among the religious leaders, who could establish a government based on divine guidance for the first time in human history, and that, too, in a land where anarchy had reigned supreme for centuries. He brought law, order, and social justice to a people notorious for endless retaliatory conflicts. If anyone ever became an unchallenged ruler by divine right, it was Muhammad, and Muhammad alone. While he possessed power as absolute as humanly attainable, he remained ever humbler than any of his followers. He said, *"I am merely a servant of God and I have been sent only as a teacher."*

It was Muhammad (peace be upon him) who for the first time taught people to give up alcohol, drugs and all kinds of unclean food. It was none other than Muhammad (peace be upon him) who for the first time in history established women's rights by allowing them to own property, inherit, question authorities, reject arranged marriages, and seek divorce when they had reasons for doing so.

There never was such an unlettered man who put the wisdom of the scholars of all the later generations to shame. And there never was a religious leader like him who was so "modern" in his attitudes and policies. He condemned racism and nationalism; he established laws to protect animals, trees, and the environment; he established workers' rights and banned interest.

In a brief span of 23 years of his prophetic life, Muhammad (peace be upon him) was able to transform the faith, morality, daily life, and the very mindset of all the varied tribes of Arabia. Within a hundred years his message had changed the hearts and lives of millions in different parts of the world.

The details of the Prophet's personal life such as how he ate, drank, washed himself, and so on, can be learned from the volumes of Hadith, which form a treasure for such information on his lifestyle. Indeed, it would be impossible to give on this page a detailed account of the varied aspects of the personality of the man Muhammad (peace be upon him). Therefore, I would content myself by highlighting here just a few aspects of his personal life.

The Prophet was taller than average, of strong physical build; he was fair of complexion, had a prominent forehead, along with long and thick eyelashes. His face was genial and had a very attractive and pleasant smile.

When he spoke, he spoke to the purpose or else he kept quiet. He was the first to greet a person; and he was not the first to withdraw his hand from a handshake. He never liked people paying him too much respect and prohibited them from standing up when he entered. He visited the poor and the ailing and advised the Muslims to do likewise. He invited the poorest of the poor to partake of his scanty meal.

His wife `A'ishah said, *"He always joined in household work and would at times mend his clothes, cobble his shoes, and sweep the floor. He would milk, tether, and feed his animals and do the household shopping"* (Al-Bukhari).

The Prophet was of very clean habits and used to brush his teeth five times a day, before each of the daily Prayers. After midnight he used to get up for the Tahajjud Prayers (optional late night Prayer) which he never missed in his life (Al-Bukhari). He was not fastidious about his bed; sometimes he slept on his cot, sometimes on an ordinary mattress, and sometimes on the ground (Zarqani).

He was gentle and kindhearted, always ready to overlook the faults of others. Politeness, generosity, simplicity, and sincerity were the hallmarks of his character.

In dispensing justice, he was firm, but his severity was tempered with compassion. His charming manners won him the affection of his followers. Though he was the Messenger of Allah, and virtually became the ruler of Arabia, he never was proud, and never did he assume any air of superiority. Fear of Allah and humility were deeply ingrained in his heart.

He always received people with courtesy and showed respect to older people. He said, *"To honor an old man is to show respect to Allah."*

He was very kind to animals. Once during a journey, somebody picked up some bird's eggs. The bird's painful note and fluttering attracted the attention of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who asked the man to replace the eggs (Al-Bukhari).

Also as his army marched towards Makkah to conquer it, they passed a female dog with puppies. The Prophet (peace be upon him) not only gave orders that they should not be disturbed, but posted a man to see that this was done.

The Prophet loved the company of the poor people; and he used to pray, *"O Allah, keep me poor in my life and at my death, and raise me at resurrection among those who are poor"* (An-Nasa'i).

His house was a hut with walls of unbaked clay and a thatched roof of palm leaves covered by camel skin. He used to sleep on a rough mattress. Once his disciples noticed its imprint on his back. They wished to give him a soft bed, but he declined the offer, saying: *"What have I to do with worldly things? My connection with the world is like that of a traveler resting for a while underneath the shade of a tree and then moving on."*

He advised the people to live simple lives and himself practiced great austerities. When he died there was nothing in his house except a few seeds of barley left from a mound of the grain (Al-Bukhari).

The Prophet said about himself, *"Allah has sent me as messenger so that I may demonstrate perfection of character, refinement of manners, and loftiness of deportment"* (Malik).

And when he died, he did not leave a cent, nor any property except his white mule, his weapons, and a piece of land which he had dedicated for the good of the community (Al-Bukhari).

Allah says in the Qur'an what means: *{You have indeed in the Messenger of God [Muhammad] a beautiful pattern [of conduct] for anyone whose hope is God and the Final Day}.* (Al-Ahzab 33:21)

The Forgiveness of Muhammad Shown to Non-Muslims

The Prophet Muhammad, may God praise him, was described as a "Mercy for all the Worlds", as God said in the Quran: *{We have sent you as a mercy for all the worlds.}* (Quran 21:107)

The recipients of this quality were not limited to just the Muslim nation, but it also extended to non-Muslims, some of who spent all their effort trying to harm the Prophet and his mission. This mercy and forgiveness is clearly demonstrated in the fact that the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, never took revenge on anyone for personal reasons and always forgave even his staunch enemies. Aisha said that the Prophet never took revenge on his own behalf on anyone. She also said that he never returned evil for evil, but he would forgive and pardon. This will, God willing, become clear after a deep analysis of the following accounts of his life.

In the earlier portion of his mission, the Prophet traveled to the city of Taif, a city located in the mountains nearby to Mecca, in order to invite them to accept Islam. The leaders of Taif, however, were rude and discourteous in their treatment of the Prophet. Not being content with their insolent attitude towards him, they even stirred up some gangs of the town to harass him. This riff-raff followed the Prophet shouting at and abusing him, and throwing stones at him, until he was compelled to take refuge in an orchard. Thus the Prophet had to endure even more obstacles in Taif than he had had to face in Mecca. These ruffians, stationed either side of the path, threw stones at him until his feet were injured and smeared with blood. These oppressions so grievously dejected the Prophet and plunged him into in such a state of depression that a prayer, citing his helplessness and pitiable condition and seeking the aid of God, spontaneously came from his lips:

"O God, to You I complain of my weakness, lack of resources and humiliation before these people. You are the Most Merciful, the Lord of the weak and my Master. To whom will You consign me? To one estranged, bearing ill will, or an enemy given power over me? If You do not assign me any worth, I care not, for Your favor is abundant upon me. I seek refuge in the light of Your countenance by which all darkness is dispelled and every affair of this world and the next is set right, lest Thy anger should descend upon me or Your displeasure light upon me. I need only Your pleasure and satisfaction for only You enable me to do good and evade the evil. There is no power and no might but You."

The Lord then sent the angel of mountains, seeking the permission of the Prophet to join together the two hills and crush the city of Taif, between which it was located. Out of his great tolerance and mercy, the Messenger of God replied, *"No! For, I hope that God will bring forth from their loins people who will worship God alone, associating nothing with Him."* (Saheeh Muslim).

His mercy and compassion was so great that on more than one occasion, God, Himself, reprimanded him for it. One of the greatest opponents of Islam and a personal enemy, was Abdullah bin Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites of Medina. Outwardly proclaiming Islam, he surreptitiously inflicted great harm to the Muslims and the mission of the Prophet. Knowing his state of affairs, the Prophet Muhammad still offered the funeral prayer for him and prayed to God for his forgiveness. The Quran mentions this incident in these words: *{And never (O Muhammad) pray for one of them who dies, nor stand by his grave. Lo! They disbelieve in God and His Messenger, and they died while they were evil doers.}* (Quran 9:84).

Abdullah bin Ubayy worked all his life against Muhammad and Islam and left no stone unturned so as to bring him into disrepute and try to defeat his mission. He withdrew his three hundered supporters in the battle of Uhud and thus almost broke the backbone of the Muslims at one stroke. He engaged in intrigues and acts of hostility against the Prophet of Islam and the Muslims. It was he who tried to bring shame to the Prophet by inciting his allies to falsely accuse the Prophet's wife, Aisha, of adultery in order to discredit him and his message.

The mercy of the Prophet even extended to those who brutally killed and then mutilated the body of his uncle Hamzah, one of the most beloved of people to the Prophet. Hamzah was one of the earliest to accept Islam and, through his power and position in the Quraishite hierarchy, diverted much harm from the Muslims. An Abyssinian slave of the wife of Abu Sufyan, Hind, sought out and killed Hamzah in the battle of Uhud. The night before the victory of Mecca, Abu Sufyan accepted Islam, fearing the vengeance of the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. The latter forgave him and sought no retribution for his years of enmity. After Hind had killed Hamzah she mutilated his body by cutting his chest and tearing his liver and heart into pieces. When she quietly came to the Prophet and accepted Islam, he recognized her but did not say anything. She was so impressed by his magnanimity and stature that she said, *"O Messenger of God, no tent was more deserted in my eyes than yours; but today no tent is more lovely in my eyes than yours."*

Ikrama, son of Abu Jahl, was a great enemy of the Prophet and Islam. He ran away after the victory of Mecca and went to Yemen. After his wife embraced Islam, she brought him to the Prophet Muhammad under her protection. He was so pleased to see him that he greeted him with the words: *"O emigrant rider, welcome."*

Safwan bin Umaya, one of the chiefs of Mecca, was also a great enemy of Muhammad and Islam. He promised a reward to Umair ibn Wahab if he managed to kill Muhammad. When Mecca was conquered, Safwan ran away to Jeddah in the hope of finding a berth that would take him to Yemen by sea. Umair ibn Wahab came to Muhammad and said, *"O Messenger of God! Safwan ibn Umayya, a chief of his tribe, has run away from fear of what you might do to him and threatens to cast himself into the sea."* The Prophet sent him a guarantee of protection and, when he returned, he requested Muhammad to give him two months to come to a decision... He was given four months, after which he became a Muslim by his own will.

Habir ibn al-Aswad was another vicious enemy of Muhammad and Islam. He inflicted a serious injury to Zainab, daughter of the Noble Prophet when she decided to migrate to Medina. She was pregnant when she started her migration, and the polytheists of Mecca tried to stop her from leaving. This particular man, Habbar bin al-Aswad, physically assaulted her and intentionally caused her to fall down from her camel. Her fall had caused her to miscarry her baby, and she herself, was badly hurt. He had committed many other crimes against Muslims as well. He wanted flee to Persia but, when he decided to come to Muhammad instead, the Prophet magnanimously forgave him.

The tribe of Quraish the were archenemies of Islam and, for a period of thirteen years while he was still in Mecca, they would rebuke the Prophet, taunt and mock him, beat him and abuse him, both physically and mentally. They placed the afterbirth of a camel on his back while he prayed, and they boycotted him and his tribe until the social sanctions became unbearable. They plotted and attempted to kill him on more than one occasion, and when the Prophet escaped to Medina, they rallied the majority of the Arab tribes and waged many wars against him. Yet, when he entered Mecca victorious with an army of 10,000, he did not take revenge on anyone. The Prophet said to the Quraish: *"O people of Quraish! What do you think I will do to you?* Hoping for a good response, they said: *"You will do good. You are a noble brother, son of a noble brother."* The Prophet then said: *"Then I say to you what Joseph said to his brothers: 'There is no blame upon you.' Go! For you all free!."*

Rarely in the annals of history can we read such an instance of forgiveness. Even his deadliest enemy Abu Sufyan, who led so many battles against Islam, was forgiven, as was any person who stayed in his house and did not come to fight him. The Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, was all for forgiveness and no amount of crime or aggression against him was too great to be forgiven by him. He was the complete example of forgiveness and kindness, as mentioned in the following verse of the Quran: *{Keep to forgiveness (O Muhammad), and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant.}* (Quran 7:199).

He always repelled evil with the good of forgiveness and kind behavior for, in his view, an antidote was better than poison. He believed and practiced the precept that love could foil hatred, and aggression could be won over by forgiveness. He overcame the ignorance of the people with the knowledge of Islam, and the folly and evil of the people with his kind and forgiving treatment. With his forgiveness, he freed people from the bondage of sin and crime, and also made them great friends of Islam. He was an epitome of the verse of the Quran: *{Good and evil are not alike. Repel evil with what is better. Then he, between whom and you there was hatred, will become as though he was a bosom friend.}* (Quran 41:34).

The Prophet and Uniting the Muslim Ummah

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) gathered his nation and united its decisions because he is the Seal of the Prophets and the leader of the Messengers sent by Allah. He is the leader of all who fight for the sake of Allah and he was sent as a mercy to all humanity and supported by the care of Allah the All-Mighty.

And to explain this, it can be said that that the noble Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was able to fulfill such unity and solidarity thanks to many causes and means, such as the strength of his character, his sincere devotion to his message, as well as his detestation of the false idols that prevailed at that time; and, moreover, he implanted the hearts with a creed that was superior to the false and trivial pagan beliefs.

He lightened the hearts with the light of believing in the Glorious Creator Who owns all that is in the heavens and on earth. He firmly fixed this faith, practically and continuously, by the acts of worship his Lord revealed to him, such as Prayers, fasting, Zakah, Hajj, and other kinds of good deeds.

In addition to this, he purified the souls of his people of grudges and hatred; there was no room for aggression or injustice, no room for pride or insults, but rather brotherhood, love and equality because they were of one origin, and there was no privilege of an Arab over a non-Arab except through piousness.

Besides, he taught them that they have no actual power or might; that when they are self-conceited they will lose, but when they are proud of their Creator they will succeed and prosper; and that glory is to Allah, His Messenger and to the believers. This is why the Qur'an states in Surat Aal `Imran: *{And hold fast, all of you together, to the cable of Allah, and do not separate...}* (Aal `Imran: 103)

From such ways, also, the value of life and its pleasures was minimized in their eyes. As long as one looks down upon life, his humanity increases, and he deserves to gather all human beings under the roof of love and faithfulness. He also made them look forward to a marvelous Heaven and to live for an eternal life to come after this temporary life. And since for such causes competitors must work together and diverse people must cooperate, how will be the case with those with a common identity?

Moreover, he dyed the patriotic motive with a religious one and stated that to love your homeland is to believe, and to defend your property is part of good religion.

Such a strong heavenly bond joined all parties with a bond of solidarity and agreement, for they could not have authority over their lands and defend their sovereignty to please their Lord unless each and every one of them was a help and support to his brother, for one Muslim to another Muslim is like a solid wall (of bricks) supporting each other.

Finally, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) succeeded in uniting his Ummah and people because he turned them into a pious and faithful nation that works for its lifetime as if it will live forever and works for the Hereafter as if death will end it tomorrow. Therefore, this religion will only prosper by what caused its prosperity at the very beginning; as for those who are lagging behind, if they want to come forward, they have the way right in front of them.



The Simple Life of Muhammad

If we compare the life of Muhammad (Peace be upon him) before his mission as a prophet and his life after he began his mission as a prophet, we will conclude that it is beyond reason to think that Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was a false prophet, who claimed prophethood to attain material gains, greatness, glory, or power.

Before his mission as a prophet, Muhammad (Peace be upon him) had no financial worries. As a successful and reputed merchant, Muhammad (Peace be upon him) drew a satisfactory and comfortable income. After his mission as a prophet and because of it, he became worse off materially. To clarify this more, let us browse the following sayings on his life:

- Aa'isha, Muhammad's wife, said, *"O my nephew, we would sight three new moons in two months without lighting a fire (to cook a meal) in the Prophet's (Peace be upon him) houses."* Her nephew asked, *"O Aunt, what sustained you?"* She said, *"The two black things, dates and water, but the Prophet (Peace be upon him) had some Ansar neighbors who had milk-giving she-camels and they used to send the Prophet (Peace be upon him) some of its milk."* (1)

- Sahl Ibn Sa'ad, one of Muhammad's (Peace be upon him) companions, said, *"The Prophet of God (Peace be upon him) did not see bread made from fine flour from the time God sent him (as a prophet) until he died."* (2)

- Aa'isha, Muhammad's (Peace be upon him) wife, said, *"The mattress of the Prophet (Peace be upon him), on which he slept, was made of leather stuffed with the fiber of the date-palm tree."* (3)

- Amr Ibn Al-Hareth, one of Muhammad's (Peace be upon him) companions, said that when the Prophet (Peace be upon him) died, he left neither money nor anything else except his white riding mule, his arms, and a piece of land which he left to charity. (4)

Muhammad (Peace be upon him) lived this hard life till he died although the Muslim treasury was at his disposal, the greater part of the Arabian Peninsula was Muslim before he died, and the Muslims were victorious after eighteen years of his mission. Is it possible that Muhammad (Peace be upon him) might have claimed prophethood in order to attain status, greatness, and power? The desire to enjoy status and power is usually associated with good food, fancy clothing, monumental palaces, colorful guards, and indisputable authority. Do any of these indicators apply to Muhammad (Peace be upon him)? A few glimpses of his life that may help answer this question follow.

Despite his responsibilities as a prophet, a teacher, a statesman, and a judge, Muhammad (Peace be upon him) used to milk his goat, (5) mend his clothes, repair his shoes, (6) help with the household work, (7) and visit poor people when they got sick. (8) He also helped his companions

in digging a trench by moving sand with them. [9] His life was an amazing model of simplicity and humbleness.

Muhammad's (Peace be upon him) followers loved him, respected him, and trusted him to an amazing extent. Yet he continued to emphasize that deification should be directed to God and not to him personally. Anas, one of Muhammad's (Peace be upon him) companions, said that there was no person whom they loved more than the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), yet when he came to them, they did not stand up for him because he hated their standing up for him, [10] as other people do with their great people.

Long before there was any prospect of success for Islam and at the outset of a long and painful era of torture, suffering, and persecution of Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and his followers, he received an interesting offer. An envoy of the pagan leaders, Otba, came to him saying, *"...If you want money, we will collect enough money for you so that you will be the richest one of us. If you want leadership, we will take you as our leader and never decide on any matter without your approval. If you want a kingdom, we will crown you king over us..."*. Only one concession was required from Muhammad (Peace be upon him) in return for that, to give up calling people to Islam and worshipping God alone without any partner.

Wouldn't this offer be tempting to one pursuing worldly benefit?
Was Muhammad (Peace be upon him) hesitant when the offer was made?
Did he turn it down as a bargaining strategy leaving the door open for a better offer?

The following was his answer: *{In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful}* And he recited to Otba the verses of the Quran 41:1-38.11 [11]. The Following are some of these verses: *{A revelation from (God), the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful; a Book whereof the verses are explained in detail; a Quran in Arabic, for people who know, giving good news and warning, yet most of them turn away, so they do not listen}*. (Quran, 41:2-4)

On another occasion and in response to his uncle's plea to stop calling people to Islam, Muhammad's (Peace be upon him) answer was as decisive and sincere: *"I swear by the name of God, O Uncle!, that if they place the sun in my right-hand and the moon in my left-hand in return for giving up this matter (calling people to Islam), I will never desist until either God makes it triumph or I perish defending it."* [12]

Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and his few followers did not only suffer from persecution for thirteen years but the unbelievers even tried to kill Muhammad (Peace be upon him) several times. On one occasion they attempted to kill him by dropping a large boulder, which could barely be lifted, on his head. [13] Another time they tried to kill him by poisoning his food. [14]

What could justify such a life of suffering and sacrifice even after he was fully triumphant over his adversaries?

What could explain the humbleness and nobility which he demonstrated in his most glorious moments when he insisted that success is due only to God's help and not to his own genius?

Are these the characteristics of a power-hungry or a self-centered man?

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(1) Narrated in Saheeh Muslim, **#2972**, and Saheeh Al-Bukhari, **#2567**.
(2) Narrated in Saheeh Al-Bukhari, **#5413**, and Al-Tirmizi, **#2364**.
(3) Narrated in Saheeh Muslim, **#2082**, and Saheeh Al-Bukhari, **#6456**.
(4) Narrated in Saheeh Al-Bukhari, **#2739**, and Mosnad Ahmad, **#17990**.
(5) Narrated in Mosnad Ahmad, **#25662**.
(6) Narrated in Saheeh Al-Bukhari, **#676**, and Mosnad Ahmad, **#25517**.
(7) Narrated in Saheeh Al-Bukhari, **#676**, and Mosnad Ahmad, **#23706**.
(8) Narrated in Mowatta' Malek, **#531**.
(9) Narrated in Saheeh Al-Bukhari, **#3034**, and Saheeh Muslim, **#1803**, and Mosnad Ahmad, **#18017**.
(10) Narrated in Mosnad Ahmad, **#12117**, and Al-Tirmizi, **#2754**.
(11) Al-Serah Al-Nabaweyyah, Ibn Hesham, **vol. 1, pp. 293-294**.
(12) Al-Serah Al-Nabaweyyah, Ibn Hesham, **vol. 1, pp. 265-266**.
(13) Al-Serah Al-Nabaweyyah, Ibn Hesham, **vol. 1, pp. 298-299**.
(14) Narrated in Al-Daremey, **#68**, and Abu-Dawood, **#4510**.



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